

Message Text

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64

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 MC-02

IGA-02 AID-05 EB-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 ACDA-07 /093 W

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R 051305Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA BAHRAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC 3335

INFO SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE

USAREUR HEIDELBERG GE

JCS WASHINGTON DC

DA WASHINGTON DC

CNO WASHINGTON DC

CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GE

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK

COMIDEASTFOR

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAMA 1110

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS : MASS, BA

SUBJECT : BAHRAIN DEFENCE FORCE HELICOPTER SURVEY

REFS : SECDEF MSG DTG 240134Z JUL 76

1. SURVEY TEAM, LED BY COL. MCCONNELL, ARRIVED AS SCHEDULED
EARLY MORNING AUGUST 3. AMBASSADOR AND MIDEASTFOR HELD
BRIEFING SESSION FOR TEAM WHICH STRESSED HISTORICAL
AND POLITICAL/ECONOMIC FACTORS RELATING TO BAHRAIN, THE BDF,
US-BAHRAIN RELATIONS, THE STATUS OF THE NAVY PRESENCE IN
BAHRAIN, ETC. ON AFTERNOON OF AUGUST 3, MINISTER OF DEFENCE/
HEIR APPARENT SHAIKH HAMAD BIN ISA AL KHALIFA (WHO IS ALSO
ACTING PRIME MINISTER DURING ABSENCE OF HIS UNCLE FROM BAHRAIN)
HOSTED A TWO-HOUR TEA/DISCUSSION FOR THE TEAM.

2. MORNING OF AUGUST 4, TEAM MET WITH "WORKING LEVEL" OF BDF.

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THIS CONSISTED OF CHIEF OF STAFF COL. KHALIFA BIN AHMED AL

KHALIFA, AIR WING COMMANDER LT. COL. IHSAN SHURDOM (ON SECOND-MENT FROM JORDAN) AND CAPT. ABDULLAH AL KHALIFA (AIDE TO THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE). TEAM WAS ACCOMPANIED BY LT. CHALLANCIN OF COMIDEASTFOR STAFF AND BURLEIGH AND SKIPPER FROM EMBASSY. COL. KHALIFA WELCOMED TEAM TO BDF, AND SKETCHED HIS GENERAL IDEA OF SCOPE OF SURVEY. THIS INCLUDED COMMENT THAT HE HOPED TEAM WOULD ADDRESS CREATION OF BOTH JET FIGHTER SQUADRON AND HELICOPTER CAPACITY OF NEW AIR WING. COLS. MCCONNELL AND ZAPATA CAREFULLY AND ACCURATELY DESCRIBED THE TOR OF THE TEAM, WHICH WAS REINFORCED BY EMBOFF AS TO BACKGROUND OF REQUEST FOR THE HELICOPTER SURVEY FROM SHAIKH HAMAD TO AMBASSADOR IN MARCH. FYI: IN DISCUSSION OF PRIME MINISTER AND CROWN PRINCE'S INTERESTS IN U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE JUNE 15 (PARA 5, MANAMA 762), SHAIKH HAMAD HAD ASKED AMBASSADOR IF HELICOPTER SURVEY TEAM MIGHT BE BROADENED TO TAKE A LOOK AT ENTIRE SPECTRUM OF BDF MODERNIZATION PLANNING. AMBASSADOR SUGGESTED THAT TO SEEK TO EXPAND PURPOSE OF SURVEY AT THAT LATE DATE WOULD SUBSTANTIALLY DELAY HELICOPTER SURVEY. SHAIKH HAMAD AGREED TO DROP THE IDEA. END FYI. AFTER SOME DISCUSSION BDF SIDE AGREED THAT TEAM WOULD MAKE REPORT COVERING HELICOPTER WING ONLY BUT "KEEP IN MIND AS BACKGROUND" THE THOUGHT THAT BDF ULTIMATELY INTENDS TO CREATE FIGHTER SQUADRON WING AS WELL.

3. AS PART OF INTRODUCTORY REMARKS, BURLEIGH MADE DISCLAIMER ON BEHALF OF USG FOR ANY COMMITMENTS REGARDING EITHER PRICE OR DATES OF AVAILABILITY FOR ANY EQUIPMENT WHICH MIGHT BE RECOMMENDED IN THE FINAL REPORT TO THE BDF. DISCLAIMER SEEMED TO BE ACCEPTED BY BDF SIDE WITHOUT MUCH CONCERN.

4. REMAINDER OF MORNING SESSION DEVOTED TO QUESTION AND ANSWERS RELATING TO MISSION OF HELICOPTER WING, DEFINITION OF THREAT, REVIEW OF POSSIBLE CONTRACTUAL RELATIONSHIPS INVOLVING MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR FACILITIES WITH PRIVATE CONTRACTORS, ETC.

5. COMMENT: EMBASSY HAS BEEN IMPRESSED WITH PROFESSIONALISM AND COMPETENCE, AS WELL AS DIPLOMATIC FINESSE, OF MEMBERS OF THE TEAM, VERY ABLY LED BY COL. MCCONNELL. IT IS HOT AND HUMID IN BAHRAIN AND THE BDF IS EXPECTEDLY VAGUE AND UNSURE OF ITS NEEDS, SO THE CHALLENGE TO THE TEAM IS A CONSIDERABLE ONE.

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6. THIS MESSAGE HAS BEEN COORDINATED WITH SURVEY TEAM LEADER.
TWINAM

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
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